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The Way of Renewal

MEDITATIONS FOR
THE FORTY DAYS OF LENT

Selected by Arthur Lichtenberger



1960

GREENWICH • CONNECTICUT

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 60-5818
Printed in the United States of America.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Second Printing
312-260-U-7.5-2.5

PREFACE

THE AIM of this book is twofold: to present a selection of great passages on some of the Lenten themes and to encourage the reader to turn to the sources of these quotations himself.

We begin, as the Collect and Epistle for Ash Wednesday do, with the necessity of penitence. Quite as clearly in the days before Easter as in the days preceding Christmas we hear the Advent call: *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, the new era is here and the only way to enter it is through repentance. We must gain the perspective of the new age where God not man is at the center of life. The Collect for the First Sunday in Lent tells us of the discipline of abstinence. This is a neglected discipline in our day; we give up petty pleasures with little understanding of what renunciation means. Again a new perspective is needed: to see this discipline as a way of opening our lives to the redeeming power of God in Christ, not as a tool to be used for our own benefit. The third theme is the need of moral effort, another response to the love of God. The worst heresy, said George Macdonald, is to divide religion and righteousness. We are not trying to save ourselves, that we know is impossible. But because we are redeemed in Christ we have in Him both the incentive and the power to live in the world as His disciples. Then, always, we are conscious of the fact of who we are as we make this effort: citizens of the Kingdom. That is the fourth theme. We are citizens of the Kingdom and therefore both creatures and children of God. The social note is strong here as it is throughout the whole time of Lent; our economic and political ways stand under the judgment of God and must be redeemed. The Gospel for the Fourth Sunday in Lent gives us the next theme with its fore-shadowing of the Eucharist. Here is the heart of Christian worship and life; an act given to us by what our Lord Himself did and which we are to do "for the anamnesis (remembrance) of Him." Then in the last two weeks of Lent our

thoughts are centered wholly upon Christ, the Word made flesh, who for us men and for our salvation came, was crucified, dead and buried. We reflect upon His coming, who He was, upon His cross and passion.

But Lent, we know, issues in the great forty days of Eastertide. It is a period of preparation and we miss its significance if we think of it as complete in itself or as a melancholy time from which the day of Easter delivers us. The disciplines of Lent are means to an end. Together, for Lent is a corporate effort, we become "learners" and "penitents." We keep Lent not for its own sake but that we may better understand and celebrate the triumph of Christ. A well-kept Lent then will carry us beyond Easter. Why is it that we have well attended services in Lent and crowded churches on Easter, and then again the faithful few? The forty days of Lent are only a prelude to the triumphant forty days of Easter; certainly we ought to come through Lent with greater devotion than we entered it. We need to recover the true emphasis of this season: a time when we are made strong both to proclaim and to demonstrate our conviction that Christ is Lord over every realm of life.

The attempt has been made, therefore, to select for each theme passages which illustrate the primary purpose of Lent: to afford a way of renewal. These selections are from a wide range of Christian thought; from St. Athanasius to W. H. Auden, from the little known *Paradise of the Fathers* to the popular and widely quoted writings of C. S. Lewis. Although some of the passages are familiar, many of the best known classics of Christian devotion have been omitted deliberately. Most readers of this book will be quite familiar with *The Imitation of Christ*, there may be many who have not discovered the riches of William Law's *A Serious Call* or Jean Grou's *Meditations on the Love of God*. Where it has been necessary to shorten a passage I have not indicated it in the text; several series of dots do not improve the appearance of a page and only annoy the reader. I hope I have not marred or distorted the sense of the author by any such omissions.

My thanks are due to Methuen & Co. for permission to include

the passage from *Mixed Pasture* by Evelyn Underhill; to Longmans, Green & Co. for the extracts from *The School of Charity* and *The Mystery of Sacrifice* by Evelyn Underhill, and *Vision of God* by Kenneth E. Kirk; to E. P. Dutton & Co. for the extract from *Letters to a Niece* by Baron Friedrich von Hügel, to The Macmillan Co. for the selections from *The Case for Christianity* by C. S. Lewis, and *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* by St. Athanasius; to Student Christian Movement Press for *The Hope of a New World* by William Temple; to Cambridge University Press for the excerpt from *Christian Doctrine* by J. S. Whale; to Princeton University Press for the passage from *Training in Christianity* by Søren Kierkegaard; to Harper & Brothers for an extract from *Purity of Heart* by Kierkegaard, and *Christian Perfection* by Fénelon; to Oxford University Press for selections from *Christian Discourses* by Kierkegaard; to the Dacre Press, A. & C. Black, publishers, for the extracts from *The Shape of the Liturgy* by Dom Gregory Dix; to Morehouse-Barlow Co. for a passage from *Centrality of Christ* by William Temple; and to Random House for the selection from *For the Time Being, A Christmas Oratorio* in *The Collected Poetry* of W. H. Auden.

A. L.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

The Way of Renewal was compiled in 1948 by Arthur Lichtenberger, then Dean of Trinity Cathedral, Newark, New Jersey, and was published by the Church Congress in the United States.

Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. (Joel 2:13.)

LORD, I do discover a fallacy, whereby I have long deceived myself. Which is this: I have desired to begin my amendment from my birthday, or from the first day of the year, or from some eminent festival, so that my repentance might bear some remarkable date. But when those days were come, I have adjourned my amendment to some other time. Thus, whilst I could not agree with myself when to start, I have almost lost the running of the race. I am resolved thus to be-fool myself no longer. I see no day to today, the instant time is always the fittest time. In Nebuchadnezzar's image, the lower the members, the coarser the metal: the farther off the time, the more unfit. Today is the golden opportunity, tomorrow will be the silver season, the next day but the brazen one, and so long, till at last I shall come to the toes of clay, and be turned to dust. Grant, therefore, that today I may hear thy voice. And if this day be obscure in the calendar, and remarkable in itself for nothing else, give me to make it memorable in my soul thereupon, by thy assistance, beginning the reformation of my life.

Lord, before I commit a sin, it seems to me so shallow, that I may wade through it dry-shod from any guiltiness: but when I have committed it, it often seems so deep that I cannot escape without drowning. Thus I am always in the extremities: either my sins are so small that they need not my repentance, or so great that they cannot obtain thy pardon. Lend me, O Lord, a reed out of thy sanctuary, truly to measure the dimension of my offences. But O! as thou revealest to me more of my misery, reveal also more of thy mercy: lest if my wounds in my apprehension gape wider than thy tents, my soul run out at them. If my badness seems bigger than thy goodness, but one hair's breadth, but one moment, that is room and time enough for me to run to eternal despair.

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661): *Good Thoughts in Bad Times*

THURSDAY

Penitence

THERE are only two kinds of men: the righteous who believe themselves sinners; the rest, sinners who believe themselves righteous.

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) : *Pensées*

REMEMBER that we usually disparage others upon slight grounds and little instances; and toward them one fly is enough to spoil a whole box of ointment; and if a man be highly commended, we think him sufficiently lessened, if we clap one sin of folly or infirmity into his account. Let us, therefore, be just to ourselves, since we are so severe to others, and consider, that whatsoever good any one can think or say of us, we can tell him hundreds of base, and unworthy, and foolish actions, any one of which were enough (we hope) to destroy another's reputation: therefore, let so many be sufficient to destroy our over-high thoughts of ourselves.

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) : *Holy Living*

WHEN thou attackest the roots of sin, fix thy thoughts more upon the God whom thou desirest than upon the sin which thou abhorrest.

Walter Hilton (d. 1396) : *Scale of Perfection*

DR. BEEBE says in *Nonsuch*, "As a panacea for a host of human ills, worries and fears, I should like to advocate a law that every tooth-brush should have a small telescope in its handle, and the two used equally." As far as the like of religion is concerned, if we always used the telescope before we used the toothbrush — looked first at the sky of stars, the great ranges of the beauty and majesty of God, and only then at our own small souls and their condition, needs and sins — the essential work of the toothbrush would be much better done; and without that self-conscious conviction of its overwhelming importance, and the special peculiarities and requirements of our own set of teeth, which the angels must surely find amusing.

Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941) : *The School of Charity*

THERE is a celebrated chapter in the *Visions and Revelations* of that great mystic and spiritual teacher Angela of Foligno, which tells how soon after her conversion, as she was walking alone through the vineyards between Spello and Assisi, she heard the Holy Spirit saying to her, wheresoever she looked, "Behold and see! this is My Creation!" And, gazing on that exquisite landscape she was filled with an ineffable sweetness and joy. And then all her sins and errors came back into her mind, and she was possessed by a humility such as she had never known before. We can translate that scene for ourselves. We too, seeing this living and intricate beauty, were surely filled with gratitude and delight.

But now, reverse this picture; and suppose that we are condemned to go with Christ to some of the places which we, in our corporate capacity — Christian citizens of a Christian country — have made, or allowed through stupidity and sloth to come into existence. And suppose it is our turn to meet that glance and say, Behold and see! This is *our* creation. We can each complete that episode; but none without shame. Even to think of the contrast is surely to be possessed in our turn by such a penitence as we have never known before.

Whilst we are talking theology, or going to church, or sewing the miserable little patches we call charity and social service into the rotten garment of our corporate life, or perhaps are enjoying those tiny apprehensions of God to which we can attain, in what we childishly believe to be a spiritual way, countless human souls as dear to God as our own are passing through this world under conditions of which no Christian, no lover of Christ, with an ounce of imagination, can bear to think; conditions which make their achievement of full spiritual life impossible. Thousands of us are eating what we suppose to be the Bread of Eternal Life at our brothers' expense. Yet we continue our devotional basking in the sun, our religious self-cultivation; and let the maiming influence of environment play on these myriads of other souls, pressing them back to the animal levels.

Evelyn Underhill: *Mixed Pasture*

LITANY

O Lord, Who didst come to call sinners to repentance,
Call them still and make them answer Thy call.
Be merciful to those who have no cloke for their sin,
But have seen and hated both Thee and Thy Father.
Thou Who didst melt the hardness of the thief,
Soften the hearts of all who are impenitent.
Thou Who didst recover the woman that was a sinner,
Recover all those who have fallen away from Thee.
Thou Who didst call Zacchæus from the sycamore tree,
Arouse the careless and arrest the curious.
Thou Who didst call S. Matthew from the receipt of custom,
Deliver many souls from the slavery of the world.
Thou Who didst pray for Thy murderers,
Pity those who oppose Thy rule and persecute Thy servants.
Thou Who didst cast out many devils,
Set free many by the power of Thy grace, who are possessed by
the devils of drink and lust.
Deliver the victims of pride and anger, of greed and selfishness.
Thou Who didst satisfy the doubts of S. Thomas,
Deal gently with those who can scarcely believe.
Thou Who didst uplift the sinking S. Peter,
Support all those who are weak and unstable.
Thou Who didst heal the withered hand,
Recover for many the faculties which they have lost, of prayer
and work, of self-control and self-sacrifice.
Thou Who didst make both the deaf to hear and the dumb to
speak,
Open deaf ears to Thy message;
Loosen stammering tongues to speak words of penitence.
Thou Who didst put to shame the woman of Samaria,
Reveal to many who are living in sin the shame of their life, and
bring them to repentance.

Thou Who didst raise the dead to life,
Quicken dead souls to the life of righteousness.
JESUS! JESUS! JESUS!
Who didst come to save Thy people from their sins, Save us, O
Saviour, Hosanna!

W. H. Frere and A. L. Illingworth: *Sursum Corda*

O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights, Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

THE COLLECT FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

ALL fasting, for whatsoever end it be undertaken, must be done without any opinion of the necessity of the thing itself, without censuring others, with all humility, in order to the proper end; and just as a man takes physic; of which no man hath reason to be proud, and no man thinks it necessary, but because he is in sickness, or in danger and disposition to it.

If you will secure a contented spirit, you must measure your desires by your fortune and condition, not your fortunes by your desires; that is, be governed by your needs, not by your fancy; by nature, not by evil customs and ambitious principles. He that would shoot an arrow out of a plough, or hunt a hare with an elephant, is not unfortunate for missing the mark or prey; but he is foolish for choosing such unapt instruments; and so is he, that runs after his content with appetites not springing from natural needs, but from artificial, fantastical, and violent necessities. These are not to be satisfied; or, if they were, a man hath chosen an evil instrument towards his content; nature did not intend rest to a man by filling of such desires. Is that beast better, that hath two or three mountains to graze on, than a little bee that feeds on dew or manna, and lives upon what falls every morning from the storehouses of heaven, clouds and Providence? Can a man quench his thirst better out of a river than a full urn, or drink better from the fountain, when it is finely paved with marble, than when it swells over the green turf?

Jeremy Taylor: *Holy Living And Dying*

TO DENY one's self in all things, to be subject to another's judgment, to mortify continually all inward passions, to annihilate one's self in all respects, to follow always that which is contrary to one's own will, appetite and judgment, are things that few can do: many are they that teach them, but few are they that practise them.

Many Souls have undertaken, and daily do undertake, this Way, and they persevere while they keep the sweet relish of their primitive Fervour; yet this sweetness and sensible delight is scarce done, but presently, when they are overtaken by the Storms of Trouble, Temptation and Aridity, (which are necessary things to help a man up the high Mountain of Perfection) they falter and turn back: a clear sign that they sought themselves, and not God or Perfection.

May it please God, that the Souls which have had light, and have been called to an inner peace, but which by not being constant in aridity and tribulation and temptation have turned back, may not be cast into outer darkness, like him that had not on him a wedding garment; who, although only a servant, was cast out for not having prepared himself, and for allowing himself to be guided by self-love.

This Monster must be vanquished, this Hydra of self-love destroyed, if we are to reach the summit of the high mountain of peace. This Monster is everywhere present; sometimes we find it in our intercourse with our kindred, to which we may allow ourselves to be unduly addicted. Sometimes in the desire for subtle Spiritual and temporal vain-glories, and pleasant little honours, which are of supreme value to us. Sometimes it cleaves to spiritual pleasures, laying hold even of the gifts of God, and of His graces freely bestowed: sometimes it desires to excess the preservation of health, and conceals under this the wish for good treatment and personal comfort: sometimes it would appear to be good by very subtle means, and lastly, it cleaves with tenacity to its own judgment and opinion in all things. All these are ef-

fects of Self-love, and if they be not destroyed, it is impossible that a man should ever attain to the height of perfect Contemplation, to the highest happiness of the loving Union, and the lofty Throne of Internal Peace.

Miguel de Molinos (c. 1640-1697) : *The Spiritual Guide*

A MAN will be always tripped up by that thing which he will not cut off from himself.

From *The Paradise of the Fathers*

THERE was a time in Christendom when people thought they could do penance by actually forsaking all things, by fleeing to the solitude of the desert, or seeking to be persecuted in the swarming city. There is another way of doing penance, that of being thoroughly sincere towards God. I do not know — and in case I knew differently, I trust to God that I would make bold to talk differently — I do not know that anywhere it is unconditionally required of a man in Christendom that to be a Christian and to become blessed he must in a literal sense forsake everything, or even sacrifice his life, be executed, for the sake of Christianity. But this I know, that with an insincere man God can have nothing to do. It is therefore, according to my conception, a theme for a penitential sermon, this which we have chosen, these words of Peter, 'Behold, we have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?' — that is to say, when thou art prompted by this question to ask thyself, What shall we have? No man, however, can become blessed except by grace, the Apostles also were accepted only by grace. But there is one sin which makes grace impossible, that is, insincerity; and there is one thing which God must unconditionally require, that is sincerity. If on the contrary a man holds God at arm's length by insincerity, such a man can *neither* learn to understand whether God would require him in the strictest sense to forsake all things, *nor* learn to understand himself in the humble admission that he had not indeed forsaken all things, but nevertheless confides in God's grace.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855): *Christian Discourses*

NO PEOPLE have more occasion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than those, who made some advances in a pious life: for pride can grow as well upon our virtues as our vices, and steals upon us on all occasions.

Every good thought that we have, every good action that we do, lays us open to pride, and exposes us to the assaults of vanity and self-satisfaction.

It is not only the beauty of our persons, the gifts of fortune, our natural talents, and the distinctions of life; but even our devotions and alms, our fastings and humiliations, expose us to fresh and strong temptations of this evil spirit.

And it is for this reason that I so earnestly advise every devout person to begin every day in this exercise of humility, that he may go on in safety under the protection of this good guide, and not fall a sacrifice to his own progress in those virtues which are to save mankind from destruction.

Humility does not consist in having a worse opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves lower than we really are; but as all virtue is founded in truth, so humility is founded in a true and just sense of our weakness, misery, and sin. He that rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility.

William Law (1686-1761): *A Serious Call*

TO GIVE heart and mind to God, so that they are ours no longer — to do good without being conscious of it — to pray ceaselessly and without effort, as we breathe — to love without stopping to reflect upon our feelings — to go ever onwards without pausing to measure our progress — such is the perfect forgetfulness of self which casts us upon God, as a babe rests upon its mother's breast. It is not by great deeds, long prayers, or even by heavy crosses that we may best give glory to God; self-will may taint all these, but total self-renunciation does in truth give Him all the Glory.

But we cannot attain to total self-renunciation by ourselves. God Alone can extinguish the flame of self-love within us; He Alone can destroy the old natural man, and raise up within the heart that mystical life, by which "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Jean Grou (1731-1803) : *The Hidden Life of the Soul*

WE CAN easily understand that we should give up criminal pleasures, unjust gains, and coarse frivolities, because the renunciation of all these things consists in a scorn which absolutely rejects them, and which condemns all enjoyment of them, but it is not so easy to understand the renunciation of wealth legitimately acquired, of the charms of an honest and modest life, or of honours which come from a good reputation and from a character which rises above envy.

The thing is to do what we can calmly to take care of such things in moderation, to use them for a serious purpose, and not to play with them nor to centre our emotions upon them. I say a serious purpose, because, when we do not throw ourselves into something emotionally, to enjoy it and to seek our fortune through it, we only take what we need of it. Thus the way to renounce evil things is to reject them with horror, and the way to renounce good things is to use them only moderately, as needed, trying to cut down all the imaginary needs with which greedy nature tries to flatter us.

The important thing is sincerely to have surrendered into the hands of God all our interests in pleasure, convenience and reputation. Whoever casts away all, and accepts without reservation all that God wants to give him of humiliation, suffering and trials, whether without or within, begins to harden himself against himself. He is not at all afraid of not being approved of, and of not being able to avoid the criticism of men. He has no more hypersensitiveness, or if he has some involuntarily, he despises it and checks it. He treats it so roughly, in order not to give it any consideration, that it soon lessens. This state of full acceptance and constant acquiescence makes true freedom, and this liberty produces perfect simplicity.

The soul which has no more self-interest, and which is not worrying about itself, has only candour. It goes altogether rightly without difficulty. Its peace is deep as the sea in the midst of its

THURSDAY — *Abstinence*

troubles. But while we still cling to self, we are always upset, unsure, wrapped up in reversions of self-love. Happy is he who is no longer his own!

François Fénelon (1651-1715): *Christian Perfection*

You cannot surely but look upon yourselves, as concerned in interest as well as duty, to fast. For which end we must first know in general, that there can be no certain rules laid down as necessary to be observed by all men in this case; for some require more fasting, some less.

This being premised in general, I think it is not amiss to mind you of some particular rules which I think necessary to be observed, in order to the attaining our ends in fasting.

Make no distinction at such times betwixt flesh and fish, as the Papists do, who if they do but abstain from flesh, and what proceeds from it, think they fast sufficiently, how much soever they eat or drink of other things. But neither the Scriptures, nor the Primitive Church ever observed any such distinction, but the old Catholic way was, that when they fasted they abstained from all manner of food until the evening. This the Primitive Christians observed very strictly, that when they fasted they ate neither more nor better food than, as we use to say, to keep soul and body together.

Have a care of those superstitious ends [of those] who think they worship God by it, and that they thereby make Him satisfaction for their former sins, and merit His grace and favour for the future. But you, when you fast, do it only for that end which the Apostle here mentions in my text, *Even to keep your bodies under*.

To your fasting always join prayer. These two frequently go together in Scripture and ought not to be separated by us, for they strongly excite and quicken one another.

To fasting and prayer add alms, also, the ancients scarce ever speak of fasting, but they prescribe this as necessary to the due performance of it; and the general rule they lay down for it is this, that what you save by fasting yourselves, you must give away to the relief of others.

Lastly, when you have performed this duty as exactly as you can, have a care lest you place any confidence in it, but trust

on Christ and Him alone to bless and sanctify it to the great ends for which you use it; for Christ Himself hath told you, that *without Him you can do nothing*.

William Beveridge (1637-1708): *The Usefulness of Fasting*

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

I SHOULD not love God with all my heart if I kept back anything from Him; if I were determined not to pass certain limits as the proof of my love; if I obstinately refused the sacrifice of certain things which He required of me; if I set up for myself a plan of devotion to which I was resolved to adhere, although grace might strive to impel me to make further advances.

In trying to ascertain that I keep back nothing from God, it is not necessary that I should give scope to my imagination, that I should pre-suppose extraordinary circumstances, wherein I may never find myself placed, and that I should take counsel within myself of what I should do under such circumstances. Many an illusion is likely to creep into my heart by these kinds of suppositions, much presumption may result from them. We ought not to be sure of ourselves, or count upon what we should do before we are tempted, when we are not placed in the position. Witness S. Peter; his experience disabused him; it has disabused many a one since. We expose ourselves also by cowardice to fall into despondency, and a sort of despair, not feeling ourselves capable of bearing certain tests to which God puts our love.

Let us anticipate nothing; that which we think we could do, we should not really be able to do; and that which seems above our strength, will not be so if God exacts it of us. Let us content ourselves with examining ourselves on our present position, and seeing whether at this moment we are giving to God all that He asks of us, and whether we are not putting any secret restriction upon the sacrifice of ourselves. Let us say to Him with as much sincerity as humility, "Thou Who alone knowest the secrets of my heart, do not let it refuse Thee anything, nor offer any open or secret resistance to the loving pleadings of Thy grace."

Jean Grou: *Meditations on the Love of God*

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT *Moral Effort*

Finally, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more. (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

FROM THE EPISTLE FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

It is very dangerous to go into eternity with possibilities which one has oneself prevented from becoming realities. A possibility is a hint from God. One must follow it. In every man there is latent the highest possibility, one must follow it. If God does not wish it then let him prevent it, but one must not hinder oneself. Trusting to God I have dared, but I was not successful; in that is to be found peace, calm, and confidence in God. I have not dared: that is a woeful thought, a torment in eternity.

Søren Kierkegaard: *Journals*

THERE are only two duties which our Lord requires of us, namely, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour; these are the objects we must labour for; by observing these laws perfectly, we do His will, and consequently we shall be united with Him. But, how far are we from observing these two duties as we ought to do to so great a God! May His Majesty grant us grace, in order that we may deserve to arrive at this state; and this is in our power if we wish. In my opinion, the surest sign for discovery whether we observe these two duties, is the love of our neighbour; since we cannot know whether we love God, though we may have strong proof of it; but this can be more easily discovered respecting the love of our neighbour. And be assured, that the further you advance in that love the more will you advance in the love of God likewise; for the affection which His Majesty has for us is so great, that as a return for the love we show our neighbour, He will make that love go on increasing which we have for Himself.

St. Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582): *The Interior Castle*

"THIS one thing I do — I press towards the mark."

This is intelligible enough in the case of a minister; for whether he be in the pulpit or beside a sick man's bed — or furnishing his mind in the study, evidently and unmistakably it is his profession to be doing only one thing. But in the manifold life of the man of the world and business, it is not so easy to understand how this can be carried out. To answer this, we observe there is a difference between doing and being. Perfection is being, not doing; it is not to effect an act, but to achieve a character. If the aim of life were to do something, then, as in an earthly business, except in doing this one thing the business would be at a stand-still. The student is not doing the one thing of student life when he has ceased to think or read. The laborer leaves his work undone when the spade is not in his hand, and he sits beneath the hedge to rest. But in Christian life, every moment and every act is an opportunity for doing the one thing, of *becoming* Christ-like.

In pressing towards this "mark," the apostle attained a prize; and here I offer an observation, which is not one of mere subtlety of refinement, but deeply practical. The mark was perfection of character, the prize was blessedness. But the apostle did not aim at the prize of blessedness, he aimed at the mark of perfectness.

It is a spurious goodness which is good for the sake of reward. The child that speaks truth for the sake of the praise of truth, is not truthful. The man who is honest because honesty is the best policy, has not integrity in his heart. He who endeavors to be humble, and holy, and perfect, in order to win heaven, has only a counterfeit religion. God for His own sake — Goodness because it is good — Truth because it is lovely — this is the Christian's aim.

Frederick W. Robertson (1816-1853): *A Sermon*

It is not that we keep His commandments first, and that then He loves; but that He loves us, and then we keep His commandments. This is that grace, which is revealed to the humble, but hidden from the proud.

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430)
as quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas

God only makes us enter the lists gradually with the enemies against whom we have to fight.

He does not show them to us all at once. He just places those before us who are the easiest to conquer; and He reserves the more powerful ones until we are more inured to the warfare.

He gives us increased help as the combat becomes more difficult; so that the later victories cost no less than the former ones.

But it is not we who fight, it is grace that fights for us.

God places Himself at our head, and vanquishes our enemies before us.

He asks of us but a determined will; asks us to be armed with the sword of the Spirit, and to be covered with the shield of faith. O God, it is true that mortification only frightens those cowards who are so because they lean upon themselves, and because they lack confidence in Thee.

I have been one until now, but I would be one no longer.

I have resolved to subdue in myself all that is opposed to Thy love.

Thou knowest the measure of love that Thou expectest from me; I can but give it by an equal measure of sacrifice. My mind is made up, but I can do nothing without Thee. Help and strengthen my weakness; I am beginning very late; make up to me for all these lost years; Thou canst do it, Thou wilt do it; it will be my fault if Thou hast to reproach me for not having loved Thee in time, and for not having loved Thee in eternity as much as Thou desirest, and as I ought to love Thee.

Jean Grou: *Meditations on the Love of God*

WE CANNOT sit down and be devotional, while acquiescing in conditions which make it impossible for other souls even to obey the moral law. For it is not God who imposes such an impossibility. It is we, in the corporate sense, who do so; and we have no right to ask God to mend conditions, unless we are willing to be ourselves the tools with which the work is done.

The obligation to do something about this seems to me to rest with crushing weight on every Christian communicant, for reasons which are too sacred to be given detailed discussion here. But at least we can say that there must be a sense in which the whole world and everything in it is sacred to us because God loves it; and therefore we are committed to doing our best in, with and for it — our best physically and mentally, as well as our best spiritually. I should like to see the Ignatian act of consecration recited after all those prayers in which we ask the Divine Love to do something about the social and industrial miseries our Christian civilization has produced: "Take, Lord, and receive all *my* liberty; *my* memory, *my* understanding, *my* will, all *I* have and possess."

There are, I suppose, two main ways of taking religion. The religious soul may withdraw more and more from the world and the life of the senses, in order to go by the path of negation to God. Or it may merge itself by love and surrender in the creative Will of God; and in and with that Will, go out towards the whole world. This, of course, is the way of Christianity. The rushing out of Christ's love and admiration towards flowers, birds, children, all the simple joyous unspoilt creations of God, was part of the same movement, the same passionate desire to further the glory of God in His creatures, which showed itself in acts of healing, compassion, and forgiveness towards disease and sin; and in anger and indignation towards selfishness, meanness and hypocrisy.

Evelyn Underhill: *Mixed Pasture*

WE OUGHT to cherish the small virtues which grow at the foot of the Cross for they are watered with the blood of the Son of God. These virtues are humility, patience, sweet temper, kindness, helpfulness to our neighbours, graciousness, good will, heartiness, sympathy, readiness to forgive, simplicity, truthfulness, and others like them. Such virtues are like the violets which love the coolness of the shade, which are fed with dew, and which, though they have no brilliancy, cease not to shed fragrance around. There are great virtues on the top of the Cross which have great splendour, especially when they are accompanied with love; such are wisdom, justice, zeal, liberality and the like: and every one wishes to have these virtues because they are the most esteemed and make us the most thought of. But we should not judge of the greatness or littleness of a virtue by that which it appears to the outward eye; for a virtue that is very small in appearance may be practised with great love to God, while one that is more shining may go along with very little love; yet this is the measure of their true value before God. I put more value on prayer, which is the torch of all the virtues; on devotion, which consecrates all our actions to the service of God; on humility, which makes us have a low esteem of ourselves and of our actions; on sweet temper, which makes us kind to all the world; on patience, which makes us bear all things; than on heroism, magnanimity, liberality, virtues which do not cover so much ground and are more seldom in use. And these more splendid virtues are a little dangerous, because their brilliancy gives more occasion for vain glory, which is the true poison of all the virtues.

St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) : *Conversations*

BENDED knees, whilst you are clothed with pride; heavenly petitions, whilst you are hoarding up treasures upon earth; holy devotions, whilst you live in the follies of the world; prayers of meekness and charity, whilst your heart is the seat of spite and resentment; hours of prayer, whilst you give up days and years to idle diversions, impertinent visits and foolish pleasures; are as absurd, unacceptable services to God, as forms of thanksgiving from a person that lives in repinings and discontent.

So that, unless the common course of our lives be according to the common spirit of our prayers, our prayers are so far from being a real or sufficient degree of devotion, that they become an empty lip-labour, or, what is worse, a notorious hypocrisy.

Seeing, therefore, we are to make the spirit and temper of our prayers the common spirit and temper of our lives, this may serve to convince us that all orders of people are to labour and aspire after the same utmost perfection of the Christian life. For as all Christians are to use the same holy and heavenly devotions, as they are all with the same earnestness to pray for the Spirit of God, so is it a sufficient proof that all orders of people are, to the utmost of their power, to make their life agreeable to that one Spirit, for which they are all to pray.

As certain, therefore, as the same holiness of prayers requires the same holiness of life, so certain is it, that all Christians are called to the same holiness of life.

A soldier, or a tradesman, is not called to minister at the altar, or preach the Gospel; but every soldier or tradesman is as much obliged to be devout, humble, holy, and heavenly-minded, in all the parts of his common life, as a clergyman is obliged to be zealous, faithful, and laborious, in all parts of his profession.

All Christians, as Christians, have one and the same calling, to live according to the excellency of the Christian spirit, and to make the sublime precepts of the Gospel the rule and measure of all their tempers in common life. The one thing needful to one, is the one thing needful to all.

William Law: *A Serious Call*

WHAT is the vision of God which Christ promised, in this world in its measure, in the next in its fullness, to the pure in heart? It is confined — so we should have learnt from Bernard, Francis, Hugh of St. Victor and Thomas Aquinas — within no narrow limits. Wherever a man's mind has been uplifted, his temptations thwarted, his sorrows comforted, his resolutions strengthened, his aberrations controlled, by the sight of purity, innocence, love or beauty, — indeed, wherever he has, even for a moment, recognized and responded to the distinction between good and evil, between better and worse, — such a man has had in part the mystical experience. Dim though his mirror may have been, he has yet seen God. Where he has seen God once there he may see Him again. Purity, innocence, love and beauty are to be seen no doubt most fully in the gospel. But they are to be seen elsewhere as well; and seeing them elsewhere we can discern their delicacies and refinements in the gospel better even than before.

So far then from being rare, the mystical experience is at once the commonest and the greatest of human accidents. There is not one of us to whom it does not come daily. It is only carelessness or custom that prevents our realizing how divine it is in essence; only timidity which checks us from proclaiming that we too at such moments have seen God, even if as in a glass darkly; only folly which blinds us to the fact that these moments of vision are our surest safe-guard and our best resource in every temptation, sorrow or selfishness. In every such contact with whatever is true and honourable and just and pure and lovely and of good report the true Christian tradition allows, and indeed constrains, us to recognize the first traces of the vision of God. What Christianity offers, with its fellowship and sacraments, its life of prayer and service, its preaching of the Incarnate Son of God, is the same vision in ever-increasing plenitude.

Kenneth E. Kirk (1886-1954): *The Vision of God*

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Citizens of the Kingdom

For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light . . . and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8 and 10.)

FROM THE EPISTLE FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

WORKING for, trusting, expecting the complete manifestation of that Triune Love — that is, the redemption of the universe — must be the aim and motive of our inward and outward life. The Body of Christ exists to work for the world's transformation; to bring Eternal Life into time, by the faithful and arduous incarnation of its faith and love in concrete acts. It is an organ of the Spirit, not a devotional guild. So its efforts cannot cease till its frontiers embrace the whole created order in its power, mystery and beauty: till the whole of life's energy is running right, sublimated, woven into that robe of many colours which clothes the Thought of God, and at the heart of the Universe, ruling it in its most majestic sweep and in its homeliest detail, we find His uttered Word and active Love.

This is the work which has been delegated to us, energetic spirits created in the image of the Absolute Charity, and placed within His half-made world to further His plan; and we are required to begin now. Faith is not a refuge from reality. It is a demand that we face reality, with all its difficulties, opportunities and implications. The true subject-matter of religion is not our own little souls, but the Eternal God and His whole mysterious purpose, and our solemn responsibility to Him.

If we refuse — if we do not at least try to manifest something of the Creative Charity in our dealings with life, whether by action, thought or prayer, and do it at our own cost — if we roll up the talent of love in the nice white napkin of piety and put it safely out of the way, sorry that the world is so hungry and thirsty, so sick and so fettered, and leave it at that: then, even that little talent may be taken from us.

Evelyn Underhill: *The School of Charity*

As a good Christian should consider every place as holy, because God is there, so he should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness, because it is to be offered unto God.

The profession of a clergyman is an holy profession, because it is a ministration in holy things, an attendance at the altar. But worldly business is to be made holy unto the Lord, by being done as a service to Him, and in conformity to His Divine will.

For as all men, and all things in the world, as truly belong unto God, as any places, things, or persons, that are devoted to Divine service, so all things are to be used, and all persons are to act in their several states and employments, for the glory of God.

Men of worldly business, therefore, must not look upon themselves as at liberty to live to themselves, to sacrifice to their own humours and tempers, because their employment is of a worldly nature. But they must consider, that, as the world and all worldly professions as truly belong to God, as persons and things that are devoted to the altar, so it is as much the duty of men in worldly business to live wholly unto God, as it is the duty of those who are devoted to Divine service. . . .

As there is but one God and Father of us all, whose glory gives light and life to everything that lives, whose presence fills all places, whose power supports all beings, whose providence ruleth all events; so everything that lives, whether in Heaven or earth, whether they be thrones or principalities, men or angels, they must all, with one spirit, live wholly to the praise and glory of this one God and Father of them all.

William Law: *A Serious Call*

KEEP us, Lord, so awake in the duties of our callings that we may sleep in thy peace and wake in thy glory.

John Donne (1573-1631): *Sermons*

"WHAT do you do as a Christian?" a perfervid evangelist asked a fellow traveller in the train. "I bake," said the man. "Yes, that is your profession; but what do you do as a Christian?" Refusing all openings to admit that, as a Christian, he taught in the Sunday School or preached at the street corner, or distributed tracts, the man persisted in the sufficiency of the reply — that he baked. He was right. Such is the centrality of the Incarnation Faith. Teaching, preaching, works of mercy are the periphery: essential, but periphery.

The carpenter, the fisherman, the agriculturist — or, if you will, the miner, the iron worker and the aeroplane craftsman — are God's final revelation of His purpose in creation, in the Lord Jesus Christ, of the Carpenter's shop at Nazareth, of the fishing fleet at Galilee, and of the home at Bethany. It is the truth of that which it is the Christian mission to declare till all labour is holy and every home His Temple. Yet, in the paradox, so to salt the daily round and the common task we must be separate. Unless in our "involvement" we be separate, homes become adulterated, farm land becomes exploited, and aeroplanes mount guns: all of which is happening before our eyes.

One great frustration of serving the Church in an industrial parish, during a time of unemployment, was the obvious failure of our teaching to succeed in conveying this central truth to the generality of the folk. An unemployed man, with a most courageous wife and two beautiful children, by a supreme personal discipline and constant personal economy, managed to keep going a spotless home, a well-shod, well-clad and well-nourished family. When once he was asked why he was not connected with the Church, he replied in all conscientiousness, that he felt he and his family were not holy enough for that sort of thing. He afterwards died from an illness a main contributory cause of which was personal undernourishment. By some terrible misappropriation of our Faith thousands of our people are in fact living holy lives — as Jesus would have understood holiness — and carrying to their graves the fallacious idea that Jesus Christ belongs to some different department of experience altogether.

George Macleod: *We Shall Re-Build*

As CHRIST's purpose was to found a Kingdom, so we should think of the Church as the army of that Kingdom. It is, no doubt, true that we have repeatedly substituted compromise for warfare and prudence for the spirit of adventure. The world in which the Church is set to work has, over and over again, made terms with it, which the Church of that period has most wrongly accepted. One of the commonest of the compromises that have been made is for the world to allow the Church to be at peace in proclaiming what may be called its philosophical paradoxes provided that it keeps quiet about its moral ones. And to some extent we have to confess that the Church, as we ourselves constitute it, has fallen into the snare. We have shown, no doubt, a disproportion of concern about the distinctive philosophical doctrines of Christianity as compared with the moral duties of all disciples of Christ. We have, for example, been much more silent than we ought concerning Christ's perfectly plain teaching on the subject of wealth and poverty. We have not driven home upon men His clear intuition that though, if wealth comes, it ought to be accepted and used as an opportunity, yet it must be recognized as rather a snare to the spiritual life than an aim which the Christian may legitimately set before himself to pursue. The ways in which this compromise has been effected have varied of course from one generation to another. The vital matter is that we in our time should try to be honest with ourselves about it.

But the way in which we are to think of this society must never be primarily in relation to itself. An army does not exist for its own benefit; it exists for its kingdom and its king; and you must come to the Church not chiefly for what you can gain from it, but for what you can give to it. Come to lend yourself as a member of the Body of Christ — one of His limbs, to be moved according to His will in cooperation with all the other limbs in His Body.

William Temple (1881-1944): *Christian Faith and Life*

WE SHALL never be able, I say, to rest in the bosom of the Father, till the fatherhood is fully revealed to us in the love of the brothers. For He cannot be our Father, save as He is their Father; and if we do not see Him and feel Him as their Father, we cannot know Him as ours.

"But how," says a man, who is willing to recognize the universal neighbourhood, but finds himself unable to fulfill the bare law towards the woman even whom he loves best — "How am I then to rise into that higher region, that empyrean of love?" And, beginning straightway to try to love his neighbour, he finds that the empyrean of which he spoke is no more to be reached in itself than the law was to be reached in itself. As he cannot keep the law without first rising into the love of his neighbour, so he cannot love his neighbour without first rising higher still. The whole system of the universe works upon this law — the driving of things upward towards the centre. The man who will love his neighbour can do so by no immediately operative exercise of the will. It is the man fulfilled of God from whom he came and by whom he is, who alone can as himself love his neighbour who came from God too and is by God too. The mystery of the individuality and consequent relation is deep as the beginnings of humanity, and the questions thence arising can be solved only by him who has, practically at least, solved the holy necessities resulting from his origin. In God alone can man meet man. In Him alone the converging lines of existence touch and cross not. When the mind of Christ, the life of the Head, courses through that atom which the man is of the slowly revivifying body, when he is alive too, then the love of the brothers is there as conscious life. It is possible to love our neighbour as ourselves. Our Lord *never* spoke hyperbolically.

George Macdonald (1824-1905): *Unspoken Sermons*

Our Lord speaks of His Kingdom, or His Father's Kingdom, not as if it were to set aside that constitution of the universe, of which men had seen the tokens in family and national institutions, of which they had dreamed when they thought of a higher and more general fellowship; but as if it were that very constitution in the fulness of its meaning and power. He who is the ground of the world's order reveals Himself that we may know what its order and consistency are, how all disorder and inconsistency have arisen from the discontent and rebellion of our wills. Now an opposite feeling to this seems to characterise those who are noticing the present distractions of the world, and are suggesting how, in this day or hereafter, they may be removed. All seem to assume that the constitution of things is evil; not that we are evil in departing from it. With strange unanimity, eager politicians, restless ecclesiastics, hopeful millenarians, seem to take it for granted that the devil is lord of the universe. Which sentiment, by whomsoever entertained, is surely unchristian and ungodly. Those who use it cannot effectually connect the command "Repent" with the announcement "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"; though our Lord's example forbids us ever to separate them. For they cannot say, "There has been a holy blessed order among you, which you have been darkening, confounding, hiding from men, by your sins and selfishness; but which must and will assert itself, in spite of you and of all that resist it." Were this mode of speaking generally adopted by pastors and preachers, their hearers might be led each to ask himself, What have I done to frustrate the ends for which the Kingdom of Heaven has been established upon earth? how can I cease my strife with it, and become its obedient subject? a question which, instead of destroying their interest in the doings of the world generally, would make that interest practical and personal; instead of lessening their hopes

of the time when the darkness shall pass away and the true light shall shine out fully, would make them less earnest in guessing about it, than in preparing for it.

Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872) :
The Prayer Book and the Lord's Prayer

FATHER in Heaven! What is a man without Thee! What is all that he knows, vast accumulation though it be, but a chipped fragment if he does not know Thee! What is all his striving, could it even encompass a world, but a half-finished work if he does not know Thee: Thee the One, who art one thing and who art all! So may Thou give to the intellect, wisdom to comprehend that one thing; to the heart, sincerity to receive this understanding; to the will, purity that wills only one thing. In prosperity may Thou grant perseverance to will one thing; amid distractions, collectedness to will one thing; in suffering, patience to will one thing. Oh, Thou that giveth both the beginning and the completion, may Thou early, at the dawn of day, give to the young man the resolution to will one thing. As the day wanes, may Thou give to the old man a renewed remembrance of his first resolution, that the first may be like the last, the last like the first, in possession of a life that has willed only one thing. Alas, but this has indeed not come to pass. Something has come in between. The separation of sin lies in between. Each day, and day after day, something is being placed in between: delay, blockage, interruption, delusion, corruption. So in this time of repentance may Thou give the courage once again to will one thing. Oh, Thou that givest both the beginning and the completion, give Thou victory in the day of need so that what neither a man's burning wish nor his determined resolution may attain to, may be granted unto him in the sorrowing of repentance: to will only one thing.

Søren Kierkegaard: *Purity of Heart*

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

The Bread of Life

Read the Gospel for the Day: *St. John 6:1-14*

THE holy and frequent practice of Communion is surely the most efficacious means of increasing in us Divine Love.

The Eucharist is essentially the Sacrament of Love. It is the most admirable invention of love.

In it, Jesus Christ unites Himself to us, incorporates Himself with us. He comes to us to make us go to Him.

But what ought to be the state of the heart, so that Communion may produce in it the great effect for which it was instituted?

See nothing in the reception of the Body of Jesus Christ but love: seek nothing but love, and you will find it There.

Dwell simply, quietly, and peacefully upon the love that Jesus Christ has shown for you, and on that which in return for it He expects from you.

But beware, in the first place, of not seeking in Communion only the sweetness of the sentiments of love.

It is the strength of love, it is its generosity, it is its disinterestedness, that you ought to desire, and not to seek to please the sensuality of self-love.

Secondly, do not think that love is only given you during the time of Communion. You should return to your own homes on leaving the Holy Altar, with more love than you carried thither with you; and so with the desire and the determination to be more firmly and closely united to God, to be more attentive and more faithful to grace; more watchful over yourselves; more courageous to fight and to do violence to yourselves; more charitable towards your neighbor, more gentle and patient in bearing with him; more careful in fulfilling the duties of your station; more generous in giving to God; stronger in suffering all those crosses which may come into your way.

For all this is but love put into practice. It is that you may the

more perfectly acquit yourselves of these various obligations of the Christian life: that you go more or less often to the source of all love, nourishing yourselves, fortifying yourselves, enriching yourselves, by the reception of the Adorable Body of Jesus Christ.

Jean Grou: *Meditations on the Love of God*

WE USUALLY think of the Holy Communion in association only with God's act in Redemption; we must also think of it in connexion with His act in Creation.

In that service we take bread and wine. What are these? They are the perfect symbol of the economic life of man. Bread is an instance of God's gift made available by human labour for the satisfaction of men's needs. The same is true of wine. In the production of these things, man co-operates with God. The farmer who cares for his land and neglects his prayers is, as a farmer, co-operating with God; and the farmer who says his prayers but neglects his land is failing, as a farmer, to co-operate with God. It is a great mistake to suppose that God is only, or even chiefly, concerned with religion. But of course the truly Christian farmer cares for land and prayers alike.

In the Holy Communion service we take the bread and wine — man's industrial and commercial life in symbol — and offer it to God; because we have offered it to Him, He gives it back to us as the means of nurturing us, not in our animal nature alone, but as agents of His purpose, limbs of a body responsive to His will; and as we receive it back from Him, we share it with one another in true fellowship.

But this is not enough. The sin of man's nature, his self-centredness, is so deeply rooted in him that it is quite impossible for him, by his own act of will, to direct his life by such principles as we have described. What he chiefly needs is not guidance but redemption. Something must be done for him and in him that he can never do himself. Therefore, if there is to be a Christian civilization, we need not only citizens who have the right picture of society, but also enough citizens who have found the redeeming power that is in Christ.

If there is to be a Christian civilization, there must be a body of Christians dedicated to God and His Kingdom in a manner of which the Holy Communion, so regarded, is the picture, and for which it offers the spiritual strength.

William Temple: *The Hope of a New World*

So THE Great Intercession, placed at the very heart of the Eucharist, to check as it were the forward rush of the soul towards God, reminds us that Christianity is not a religion of escape; that it accepts the full burden, fret and responsibility of humanity, does not evade it. The Christian communicant goes to the altar as a member of the family; not as one who has contracted out of the family life. He goes to offer himself to that God, who in Christ reconciled the world to Himself. Intercession, therefore, embraces the whole world in its scope; not only the hopeful causes, but the hopeless, not only the respectable but the disgraceful. The confusions, sins, and cruelties; the people and policies that we should prefer to forget; the horrors, the failures, the short ends. All these it can, by the mysterious power of sacrifice, lift up and reconcile to God.

Evelyn Underhill: *The Mystery of Sacrifice. The Intercession*

IN THIS great prayer — which is indeed the prayer of the whole Church, for here the priest acts as the representative of the people, and in the Dialogue, the Sanctus, and the great Amen the people take their part — we reach the very heart of Christian worship. For Christian worship is, essentially, a consecration. In it man with his whole being, of soul and of body, and as the head of all creation, adores God and gives himself to God. And he is enabled to do this because in his name and for his necessity, the incarnate Logos, standing beside His creature and accepting its limitations, has consecrated Himself.

A consecrated life is not, then, something to which the soul can attain even by the most steadfast and devoted action of the dedicated will. It is something which we cannot achieve by our own efforts; and yet for which we are made. The secret Eucharistic action brings us, through self-offering to God and self-spending for men, to adoring joy, to a humble and grateful memorial of the saving action of God; and thence by the operation of the Spirit to an entire transformation in Him.

Evelyn Underhill: *The Mystery of Sacrifice. The Consecration*

Two movements merge in the real act of communion. First, the creature's profound sense of need, of incompleteness; its steadfast desire. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," who crave for God, for the Holy and Eternal, and set their longing upon Him for Himself alone; sanctifying that emotional life which is the driving force of the will, ardently desiring His Perfection, reaching out to the supernatural in faith, hope and love. Next a humble and loving acceptance of God's answer to that prayer of desire, however startling, disappointing, unappetizing it may be; bread that seems hard, stale and tasteless, the wine of eternity given in a common or ugly cup. It is not only at the visible altar or under the sacred traditional symbols that the soul receives the "rich bread of Christ." God, who comes to each in the "sacrament of the present moment" gives also in that sacrament the sustaining energy by which the present moment can be faced.

Therefore that which the Church does here, each repeated presentation of the theme of creation under liturgic forms, must be done again by each of her members hour by hour, in and with the homely stuff of circumstance. All must be given again and again; not only at the visible altar, but at the invisible altar, on which man is to lay the oblation of his love and will, that it may be hallowed and made the medium of new life. Here, by and in every event and experience, the poor soul and the rich God meet, and their mysterious and life-giving communion does or can take place. Here must be brought every pain and joy, desire and effort, accomplishment and frustration; to be met and divinized by the Divine self-giving life and love. So here the Church, the Mother of Souls, looking towards Calvary, takes the ancient tokens of sacrifice and lifts them up to Eternity in the name of Christ her high priest, and with them satisfies her children's hunger and thirst. By this unceasing giving and receiving the whole of life is to be eucharisticized; this is the Christian task. It is to be offered, blessed, and made the vehicle of that infinite self-giving, of which our small reluctant self-giving is the faint shadow on earth.

Evelyn Underhill: *The Mystery of Sacrifice. The Communion*

IF THIS feast does not show forth or declare something to the world, — if we only seek in it for some benefit to ourselves, — it cannot be a communion in the body or in the mind of Jesus Christ.

The Romanist has dwelt on the idea of the Eucharist as a Mystery. But he has had a feeling that in some way or other it must be a message to the world. The Host is therefore lifted on high; it is an object of reverence and worship to the most sensual. The Protestant rightly declares that what is meant for the spirit, is thus degraded into an object for the eye. But in his jealousy for the rights of the Spirit, he denies that the Sacrament shows forth or declares anything to mankind. He is impatient when it is called a Mystery; yet he confines its whole force to the faithful few. And so he is involved in wearisome and perpetual controversies, whether anything is actually bestowed by the Sacrament, or whether the receiver makes it what it is by the belief which he brings with him.

But what is it that is shown forth? — the Lord's Death *till he come*. It includes every craving for righteous government, for a perfect Society, for the adoption of our spirits, for the perfection of the faculties of our souls, for the full redemption of our bodies. It includes the fulfillment of every relationship, of all loving intercourse, which has been most imperfectly realized here, but which has been raised and sanctified by a diviner Communion. It includes the accomplishment of all earthly discipline and sorrow, fellowship with those whose faces we miss, but whose love must be far warmer than ever it was, because it is in more immediate contact with the perfect Love. It includes the ever deepening sense of the meaning and force of that Death which revealed the whole mind of God, which was the perfect Atonement for Man. Of this manifestation of Jesus Christ, the Lord's Supper is the perpetual prophecy and assurance. It is a remembrance of the past, of an act done once, never to be re-

peated. It is a witness of that which is — of His presence, Who has said, "Lo! I am with you alway." It testifies of an eternal Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, which is about us now, and into which we may enter.

Frederick Denison Maurice: *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*

TO THOSE who know a little of christian history probably the most moving of all the reflections it brings is not the thought of the great events and the well-remembered saints, but of those innumerable millions of entirely obscure faithful men and women, every one with his or her own individual hopes and fears and joys and sorrows and loves — and sins and temptations and prayers — once every whit as vivid and alive as mine are now. They have left no slightest trace in this world, not even a name, but have passed to God utterly forgotten by men. Yet each of them once believed and prayed as I believe and pray, and found it hard and grew slack and sinned and repented and fell again. Each of them worshipped at the Eucharist, and found their thoughts wandering and tried again, and felt heavy and unresponsive and yet knew — just as really and pathetically as I do these things. There is a little ill-spelled, ill-carved, rustic epitaph of the fourth century from Asia Minor: — “Here sleeps the blessed Chione, who has found Jerusalem for she prayed much.” Not another word is known of Chione, some peasant woman who lived in that vanished world of christian Anatolia. But how lovely if all that should survive after sixteen centuries were that one had prayed much, so that the neighbours who saw all one’s life were sure one must have found Jerusalem! What did the Sunday Eucharist in her village church every week for a lifetime mean to the blessed Chione — and to the millions like her then, and every year since? The sheer stupendous *quantity* of the love of God which this ever repeated action has drawn from the obscure christian multitudes through the centuries is in itself an overwhelming thought.

At the heart of it all is the eucharistic action, a thing of an absolute simplicity — the taking, blessing, breaking and giving of bread and the taking, blessing and giving of a cup of wine and water, as these were first done with their new meaning by a young Jew before and after supper with His friends on the

night before He died. He had told His friends to do this henceforward with the new meaning "for the *anamnesis*" of Him, and they have done it always since.

Gregory Dix (1901-1952): *The Shape of the Liturgy*

WAS ever another command so obeyed? For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need from infancy and before it to extreme old age and after it, from the pinnacles of earthly greatness to the refuge of fugitives in the caves and dens of the earth. Men have found no better thing than this to do for kings at their crowning and for criminals going to the scaffold; for armies in triumph or for a bride and bridegroom in a little country church; for the proclamation of a dogma or for a good crop of wheat; for the wisdom of the Parliament of a mighty nation or for a sick old woman afraid to die; for a schoolboy sitting an examination or for Columbus setting out to discover America; for the famine of whole provinces or for the soul of a dead lover; in thankfulness because my father did not die of pneumonia; for a village headman much tempted to return to fetich because the yams had failed; because the Turk was at the gates of Vienna; for the repentance of Margaret; for the settlement of a strike; for a son for a barren woman; for Captain so-and-so, wounded and prisoner of war; while the lions roared in the nearby amphitheatre; on the beach at Dunkirk; while the hiss of scythes in the thick June grass came faintly through the windows of the church; tremulously, by an old monk on the fiftieth anniversary of his vows; furtively, by an exiled bishop who had hewn timber all day in a prison camp near Murmansk; gorgeously, for the canonization of S. Joan of Arc — one could fill many pages with the reasons why men have done this, and not tell a hundredth part of them. And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unfailingly, across all the parishes of christendom, the pastors have done this just to *make the plebs sancta Dei* — the holy common people of God.

Gregory Dix: *The Shape of the Liturgy*

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

The Word Made Flesh

Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad. The Jews then said to him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. (St. John 8:56-58)

FROM THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY

WHEN the madness of idolatry and irreligion filled the world and the knowledge of God was hidden, whose part was it to teach the world about the Father? Man's, would you say? But men cannot run everywhere over the world, nor would their words carry sufficient weight if they did, nor would they be, unaided, a match for the evil spirits. Moreover, since even the best of men were confused and blinded by evil, how could they convert the souls and minds of others? You cannot put straight in others what is warped in yourself. Perhaps you will say, then, that creation was enough to teach men about the Father. But if that had been so, such great evils would never have occurred. Creation was there all the time, but it did not prevent men from wallowing in error. Once more, then, it was the Word of God, Who sees all that is in man and moves all things in creation, Who alone could meet the needs of the situation. It was His part and His alone, Whose ordering of the universe reveals the Father, to renew the same teaching. But how was He to do it? By the same means as before, perhaps you will say, that is, through the works of creation. But this was proven insufficient. Men had neglected to consider the heavens before, and now they were looking in the opposite direction. Wherefore, in all naturalness and fitness, desiring to do good to men as Man He dwells, taking to Himself a body like the rest; and through His actions done in that body, as it were on their own level, He teaches those who would not learn by others means to know Himself, the Word of God, and through

Him the Father. The Saviour of us all, the Word of God, in His great love took to Himself a body and moved as Man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak, half way. He became Himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which He, the Word of God, did in the body.

St. Athanasius (296-373): *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*

WHAT did God do? First of all He left us conscience, the sense of right and wrong: and all through history there have been people trying (some of them very hard) to obey it. None of them ever quite succeeded. Secondly, He sent the human race what I call good dreams: I mean those queer stories scattered all through the heathen religions about a god who dies and comes to life again and, by his death, has somehow given new life to men. . . . Thirdly, He selected one particular people and spent several centuries hammering into their heads the sort of God He was — that there was only one of Him and that he cared about right conduct. Those people were the Jews, and the Old Testament gives an account of the hammering process.

Then comes the real shock. Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says He has always existed. He says He is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Now let us get this clear. What this man said was, quite simply, the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips.

I'm trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really silly thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That's the one thing we mustn't say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn't be a great moral teacher. . . . He'd either be a lunatic — on a level with the man who says he's a poached egg — or else he'd be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But don't let us come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He hasn't left that open to us. He didn't intend to.

C. S. Lewis: *The Case for Christianity*

THEY do greatly err who acknowledge that the flesh of man was taken on Himself by Christ, but deny that the affections of man were taken; and they contravene the purpose of the Lord Jesus Himself, since thus they take away from man what constitutes man, for man cannot be man without human affections. Whence could I to-day recognize the Lord Jesus as man, whose flesh I see not, but whose affections I read of — whence, I say, could I recognize Him as man, if He had not hungered, thirsted, wept? But He is known by these things to be man, who by His Divine works is accounted to be more than man. He assumed the affections of man from His mother, that He might take on Himself our weaknesses.

St. Ambrose (c. 339-397) : *On Psalm 61*

THIS was the fulness of time, when Christ Jesus did come, that the Messiah should come.

It was so to the Jews, and it was so to the Gentiles too. Christ hath excommunicated no nation, no shire, no house, no man: he gives none of his ministers leave to say to any man, thou art not redeemed; he gives no wounded nor afflicted conscience leave to say to itself, I am not redeemed.

John Donne: *Sermons*

CHRIST is the Word of God. It is not in certain texts written in the New Testament, valuable as they are; it is not in certain words which Jesus spoke, vast as is their preciousness; it is in the Word which Jesus *is* that the great manifestation of God is made. Through everything He does, through everything He says, there shines the quiet, intense radiance of conscious Godhood. Again, I say, it is not a word or two which He utters, but it is a certain sense of originalness, of being, as it were, behind the processes of things — this is what has impressed mankind in Jesus, and been the real power of their often puzzled but never

abandoned faith in His Divinity. He has appeared to men, in some way, as He appears to us today, to be not merely the channel but the fountain of Love and Wisdom and Power, of Pity and Inspiration and Hope.

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893): *A Sermon*

IF, INDEED, we accept this tremendous affirmation of the Church concerning the Word made flesh, it must become the center of a whole philosophy. There we see the material — and St. John no doubt chose the word “flesh” because it represents the material in just that phase most commonly associated with evil, though of course in order to insist that such association is not necessary — there we see the material taken and made into the vehicle of the spiritual. There you see the sacramental principle in its fullest development and expression. And there you have a clue to the understanding of the world and the mastery of the world, that the material always exists in order to be the expression and the vehicle of what is spiritual, and that spirit at least in this world most of all exhibits itself by using and controlling the material.

And so you have a Christian conception of the spiritual life quite different from that of Neo-Platonism or of Buddhism. The spiritual is not to be found by turning our backs upon the material and leaving it to go its own way. But the spiritual is above all to be found by facing the material in fellowship with God and using it to become the expression of the divine character as that reproduces itself in our own souls through the faith in us which it has itself evoked.

And so the incarnation becomes the pivot of a whole philosophical system which sees the universe itself as a sacrament grounded in the love of God and ministering to the upbuilding of a society of spirits which exhibits the love which created them and returns that love. And at the same time it becomes the inspiring force or power which enables men to overcome the evil of the world until at last the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ — “This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.”

William Temple: *The Centrality of Christ*

COME hither, all, all, all of you, with Him is rest, and He makes no difficulties, He does but one thing, He opens his arms. He will not first (as righteous people do, alas, even when they are willing to help) — He will not first ask thee, "Art thou not after all to blame for thy misfortune? Hast thou in fact no cause for self-reproach?" It is so easy, so human, to judge after the outward appearance, after the result — when a person is a cripple, or deformed, or has an unprepossessing appearance, to judge that *ergo* he is a bad man; when a person fares badly in the world so that he is brought to ruin or goes downhill, then to judge that *ergo* he is a vicious man. But He will put no such questions to thee, He will not be thy benefactor in so cruel a fashion. If thou thyself art conscious of being a sinner, He will not inquire of thee about it, the bruised reed He will not further break, but He will raise thee up if thou wilt attach thyself to Him. He will not single thee out by contrast, holding thee apart from Him, so that thy sin will seem still more dreadful; He will grant thee a hiding-place within Him, and once hidden in Him He will hide thy sins. For He is the friend of sinners: When it is question of a sinner He does not merely stand still, open His arms and say, "Come hither"; no, He stands there and waits, as the father of the lost son waited, rather He does not stand and wait, He goes forth to seek, as the shepherd sought the lost sheep, as the woman sought the lost coin. He goes — yet no, He has gone, but infinitely farther than any shepherd or any woman, He went, in sooth, the infinitely long way from being God to becoming man, and that way He went in search of sinners.

Søren Kierkegaard: *Training in Christianity*

SIMEON:

From the beginning until now God spoke through His prophets. The Word aroused the uncomprehending depths of their flesh to a witnessing fury, and their witness was this: that the Word should be made Flesh. Yet their witness could only be received as long as it was vaguely misunderstood, as long as it seemed either to be neither impossible nor necessary, (or necessary) but not impossible, or impossible but not necessary; and the prophecy could not therefore be fulfilled. For it could only be fulfilled when it was no longer possible to receive, because it was clearly understood as absurd. The Word could not be made Flesh until men had reached a state of absolute contradiction between clarity and despair in which they would have no choice but either to accept absolutely or to reject absolutely, yet in their choice there should be no element of luck, for they would be fully conscious of what they were accepting or rejecting.

CHORUS:

The eternal spaces were congested and depraved.

SIMEON:

But here and now the Word which is implicit in the Beginning and in the End is become immediately explicit, and that which hitherto we could only passively fear as the incomprehensible I AM, henceforth we may actively love with comprehension that THOU ART. Wherefore, having seen Him, not in some prophetic vision of what might be, but with the eyes of our own weakness as to what actually is, we are bold to say that we have seen our salvation.

CHORUS:

Now and forever, we are not alone.

W. H. Auden: *For the Time Being, A Christmas Oratorio*

No INGENUITY can make Christianity merely one religion a little better than many others, but essentially the same. Still less can it be sophisticated into a mere system of philosophy. The faith of Christ is a thing unique and strange. Somebody has said, any one can believe that Jesus was a god — what is so hard to credit is that He who hung upon the cross was *the God*. That is what you are asked as Christians to believe.

And it is the sword, glittering but fearful. It must cut your life away from the standards of this world, away from its thought and its measures, no less than its aims and hopes. Hard and bitter is the separation; and you will be parted from many great and noble men, some perhaps your own teachers, who can accept about Jesus everything but the one thing needful. The Christian faith, if accepted, drives a wedge between its own adherents and the disciples of every other philosophy or religion, however lofty or soaring. And they will not see this; they will tell you that really your views and theirs are the same thing, and only differ in words, which, if only you were a little more highly trained, you would understand. Even among Christ's nominal servants, there are many who think a little good-will is all that is needed to bridge the gulf, — a little amiability and mutual explanation, a more careful use of phrases, would soon accommodate Christianity to fashionable modes of speaking and thinking, and destroy all causes of provocation. So they would. But they would destroy also its one inalienable attraction: that of being the romance among religions — a wonder, and a beauty, and a terror — no dull and drab system of thought, no mere symbolic idealism.

John Neville Figgis (1866-1919): *A Sermon*

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COLLECT FOR PALM SUNDAY

TO LIVE thus, to cram today with eternity and not with the next day, the Christian has learnt and continues to learn (for the Christian is always learning) from the Pattern. How did He manage to live without anxiety for the next day — He who from the first instant of His public life when He stepped forward as a teacher knew how His life would end, that the next day was His crucifixion, knew this while the people exultantly hailed Him as King (ah, bitter knowledge to have at precisely that moment!), knew when they were crying, "Hosanna!", at His entry into Jerusalem that they would cry, "Crucify him!", and that it was to this end He made His entry; He who bore every day the prodigious weight of this superhuman knowledge — how did He manage to live without anxiety for the next day? For just because, in quite a different way from any man, He had eternity with Him in the day that is called today, just for this reason He turned His back on the next day. We have therefore let the answer transpire in the question, have recalled how it was He managed to do what we should learn to do: He had Eternity with Him in the day that is called today, hence the next day had no power over Him, it had no existence for Him. It had no power over Him before it came, and when it came and was the day that is called today it had no other power over Him than that which was the Father's will, to which He had consented with eternal freedom, and to which He obediently bowed.

Søren Kierkegaard: *Christian Discourses*

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK

The Passion of Our Lord

Its breadth lies in the transverse beam, on which the hands of the Crucified are extended; and signifies good works in all the breadth of love; its length extends from the transverse beam to the ground, and is that whereto the back and feet are affixed; and signifies perseverance through the whole length of time to the end; its height is in the summit, which rises upwards above the transverse beam; and signifies the supernal goal, to which all works have reference, since all things that are done well and perseveringly, in respect of their breadth and length, are to be done also with due regard to the exalted character of the divine rewards: its depth is found in the part that is fixed into the ground; for there it is both concealed and invisible, and yet from thence spring up all those parts that are outstanding and evident to the senses; just as all that is good in us proceeds from the depths of the grace of God, which is beyond the reach of human comprehension and judgment.

St. Augustine: *On the Gospel of John*

THE perfection of our knowledge is Christ; the perfection of our knowledge in, or touching Christ, is the knowledge of Christ's piercing. This is the chief sight; nay, in this sight are all sights; so that know this, and know all.

Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626):
Sermon on Good Friday, 1597

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

The Passion of Our Lord

CROSSES are the great means which God employs to destroy self-love in us and to increase and purify His love within us. Whilst we, on our side, labor for these two ends by the means which He has placed at our disposal.

Crosses have in them two great advantages with reference to the destruction of self-love.

The first is that they are not of our own choosing.

Self-love always has some part in those which we impose upon ourselves: witness austerities. Our own will, which makes us embrace them, supports us under them, and we find in them subtle pleasure, which causes us to make a merit of them before God.

"It is I," we seem to say, "who give Thee that; I deprive myself of such and such a thing; I suffer such and such a thing of my own free will, for love of Thee. I am not obliged to do it, it is pure generosity on my part, which cannot fail to be pleasing to Thee."

It is not thus with the crosses that God sends us.

They fall upon us when we least expect them. Far from choosing them, our first instinct is to repel them; it is but with difficulty that our will determines to submit to them, not being able to avoid them.

The second advantage of crosses is that God, whether He sends them directly from Himself, or allows them to be dealt us, always attacks some tender point, and presses in the nail before it is necessary to deal the death-blow to this particular haunt of self-love.

We see that God knows and understands our weak point; that He knows it, and we do not know it. We should generally prefer any other cross to that one which we actually have to bear. It wounds us and revolts against our nature. We cry aloud in our despair, or excess of agony renders us silent.

It was, therefore, necessary to strike the blow there; for there nature was alive, self-love was sorrowful because of it; and if it could have been master of the occasion, it would have struck the blow anywhere else, where the suffering would have been less deep.

Jean Grou: *Meditations on the Love of God*

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

The Passion of Our Lord

AMID all the multiplicity and rich variety of New Testament teaching, one testimony is presupposed or explicit on every page. Take this away from the New Testament and you have not only radically altered its character; you have destroyed it. The New Testament witnesses throughout to the astounding fact of a crucified yet triumphant Messiah. Its constant theme is the victorious passion of the Son of God.

First, the New Testament affirms the necessity of the Cross; it regards the Crucifixion, not as a pathetic martyrdom, tragic and unexplained, but as the act of God.

Thus, Christ not only suffers; he acts. He is Priest as well as Victim. He is the Giver of the Feast and the Feast itself. He is the conscious Master of the situation throughout: "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself" (*John* x:18).

In the second place, the New Testament points to the Cross as a representative sacrifice for the sins of the world.

What does the Cry of Dereliction mean? ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" *Matt.* xxvii:46) The history of doctrine is full of attempted explanations of that terrible cry. None is successful. All lose themselves in the ultimate mysteries of time and eternity.

What we do know is this. It was the love of God — that is, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ — which identified him with sinners completely and to the uttermost. . . . He who knew no sin was "made sin" for us. We need this desperately bold New Testament metaphor to express the truth that the Saviour felt the fact and burden of human sin as though it were his own. The Man called Christ is the only Man in all history who has seen Sin for what it really is. This second Adam alone has seen it with the eyes of God. Wherefore, let me humbly and adoringly confess with all saints and with the great multitude of the redeemed on earth and in heaven, "He loved me and gave Himself for me"; he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

J. S. Whale: *Christian Doctrine*

MAUNDY THURSDAY *The Passion of Our Lord*

IN THE third place, the New Testament testifies that here is atoning sacrifice. We "draw near," and our Lord, our Victim, the Lamb of God, comes with us, for he makes himself one with us in the Incarnation. We crucify him. And he, our High Priest, takes his blood, his very life, through the veil of his broken flesh into the very presence of God. In so doing, he takes our life with him, by the power of the Incarnation and by our membership of his body. Because we are identified with him, he bears on the heart of his divine humanity all the shame and hurt of our sin. His representative action is atoning action.

Lastly, the New Testament witnesses to union with Christ, which comes about and is only made possible through his dying. There is no Atonement without this identification of believers with him. Just as no convex curve is ever without its complementary concave aspect, so all the objective truth about Christ's atoning work is incomplete and meaningless without this subjective appropriation of it. Unless the sinner is "in Christ," to use St. Paul's great phrase, Christ's atoning work has been done for him in vain. It is there, objectively and for ever, but it is ineffectual unless the redeemed man can confess, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I am alive; and yet not I, but Christ is alive in me. And the life which I now live under physical conditions, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

Our religion does not achieve or sustain this personal character unaided. In the long experience of the church, this faith-union with the Redeemer is no formal possibility; it becomes a living reality through sacramental communion with him. At the Holy Table the remembered words and deeds of Jesus, as set forth in the pages of the Gospels, become the real presence of the Lord. Believers have fellowship with him, with one another, and with the great unseen company of the redeemed on earth and in heaven, through the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. This is the end, use and effect of the Sacrament; it sets forth the means of grace and the hope of glory.

J. S. Whale: *Christian Doctrine*

FROM "EAST COKER"

The wounded surgeon plies the steel,
That questions the distempered part;
Beneath the bleeding hands we feel
The sharp compassion of the healer's art
Resolving the enigma of the fever chart.

Our only health is the disease
If we obey the dying nurse
Whose constant care is not to please
But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,
And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.

The whole earth is our hospital
Endowed by the ruined millionaire,
Wherein, if we do well, we shall
Die of the absolute paternal care
That will not leave us, but prevents us everywhere.

The chill ascends from feet to knees,
The fever sings in mental wires.
If to be warmed, then I must freeze
And quake in frigid purgatorial fires
Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars.

The dripping blood our only drink,
The bloody flesh our only food:
In spite of which we like to think
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood —
Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good.

T. S. Eliot

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5 April, 1920.

My darling Gwen,

I was so glad to get your first Old Rectory letter of 30 March. But first let me say that I have purposely waited till we should have got through these every year newly wonderful Church days — so as to be able to refer to the entire prism of many-coloured fact and emotion — which only thus together give us the true Christian reality and life. The great fact, and even the commemoration of, Good Friday, would, alone, be too austere, too heart-breaking; the great fact, and even just the feast of Easter, if alone — even if they had followed upon Our Lord's Hidden Life, or even His Preaching, but without the Passion and its commemoration, would not have drained the Cup — the bitter Cup — of the possibilities of earthly human life and earthly human interconnection to the dregs. Good Friday *and* Easter Sunday, the two together, each requiring the other, and we all requiring both — only this twin fact gives us Christianity, where suffering holds a necessary place, but never the place of the end, always only of the means. My great Troeltsch always marvels anew at that *unique* combination effected by Christianity — so earnest and so *unrigoristic* — so expansive and so full of suffering without morbidity, and of joy without sentimentality. We will all, please God, see this more and more every year, that these bitter-sweet, contraction-expansion, sacrifice-serenity, great days come round.

Friedrich von Hügel (1852-1925): *Letters to a Niece*.
From an Easter Monday letter.

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